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RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONARY PAMPHLETS

Lessons of the Revolution

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Translated from the Russian original, with Introduction and Appendix, and published by the Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda attached to the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Workmen's and Peasants' Government of the Russian Republic.

Petrograd

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE SOVIET?

Of the many terms in which the social and political sciences abound, the term "people" is perhaps the vaguest. Indeed, we have no clear-cut image and hence no effective idea of this apparently concrete entity People. Intimately connected with this term, no less vague and still more confusing, is the word "government," a word depicting a reality as concrete and as hard as the age-old rocks themselves. The relation, however, obtaining between these two realities is in one respect clear; inasmuch as all the power of a people is vested in its government, the people is divested of all power—a relation so typically, and as it were monumentally expressed in the cry, "L'état c'est moi," desperately uttered by the head of the French government during the period of its ultimate decay.

The Russian Revolution, now occupying the center of the quaking world's stage, allows the careful observer to catch a glimpse of what that entity People really must be. The Russian people, struggling to assert itself, has in the travail of the Revolution given birth to a new creation, flexible, mobile and yet persistent as are the thought and will it expresses. This creation is, the Soviets.

THE SOVIETS

The trumpets of the March revolution, 1917, brought down the Romanov dynasty, and the rejoicing of the Russian people knew no bounds. But the events immediately following had a sobering effect upon the masses. The first burning question arose: "Is the Revolution safe?" As the embodied answer to this question, sprang up the Soviet, a revolutionary creation, a child of the people's awakening consciousness. City, town and village, as well as each unit of the army, all formed their local Soviets to safeguard the Revolution.

These local organs, always functioning and therefore always reflecting the thoughts, desires and will of the small communities they represent, send delegates to the capital, who form the Central Executive Committee of all the Soviets of Workmen's, Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates. The election to the central body is carried out on the basis of party lines, so that the C. E. K. has always represented all the various currents and even undercurrents of the Russian Revolution.

Soon after the overthrow of Tsardom, the people felt that the newly-formed Provisional Government of Lvov-Rodzianko-Miliukov did not intend to deviate from the general policies of the old regime. This popular feeling imparted itself to the local Soviets, which resulted in the second question, "Who is friend and who is foe?" In other words, the Soviet was forced to explain the sense of the Revolution. The first answer was a fermentation within the Soviets, reflecting the people's questioning mind, and this fermentation ended in the cleavage of the Soviet forces. Materially the split manifested itself in the first "coalition government," headed by Kerensky.

This second question was made more vital, insistent, by the Kornilov attempt. It grew more and more obvious to

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the people that the "coalition government" was merely an expression of the old order under a new name. In response to the growing popular unrest, the rift in the Soviet deepened; whatever elements irresistibly tended to the right were pushed out by popular pressure upon the left and the result was the July insurrection. The Soviet thus emphasized the popular interpretation of the sense of the Revolution: It is not merely a political revolution, but an economico-social revolution, and whoever thwarts its course is the people's enemy.

But if indeed this is the historical sense of the Revolution, then arises a third question: By whom and How shall the issues of the Revolution be promoted and realized in life? Of course by the People, and by the power which expresses the People by the Soviets. Such was the categorical answer given by the October uprising, which forever put an end to the policy of coalition and alliances of the real Revolution with the representatives of the dying old order. Thus by a process of elimination the Soviet was finally purified of elements leaning toward the right; a process which showed, that as the individual hesitates before making his choice and stamping as his will one or the other of the ideas conflicting in his mind, so the Russian people hesitated before it found and expressed its conscious will. And the Soviet made all this possible.

In brief, these are the three phases passed through by the Soviet—from birth to manhood: (1) It issued from the very heart of the people as guardian of the Revolution; (2) While growing, it served as the pendulum—the interpreter of the Revolution; (3) Fully matured as the volitional and intellectual organ of its parent, the people, it became the realizer of the issues of the Revolution.

The superiority of the Soviet over any other form of representation is easily demonstrable. All government pretends to represent the will of the people. Now granted (for the sake of argument), that a people's will is as real as the will of an individual, and that it is the sum or re-

sultant of the sundry wills composing it, it is manifest that no representative body can satisfactorily execute this composite will.

As a matter of fact, the will of an individual is not easily satisfied by proxy. So that it may be tersely stated that the efficacy of a representative is inversely proportional to the numeric strength of the constituency represented.

Viewed from this angle, it is obvious why an order of things that has become detrimental to the people at large can be perpetuated by a "representative" government which has degenerated into a tool of the invisible government. The history of the War is very instructive in this, as in many other respects. It is now clear as day how the invisible power, the class owning and dominating the economic apparatus in all countries, owned also the representative government, and through it tried to perpetuate secret diplomacy, financial speculation, capitalistic exploitation of the masses, all factors inevitably leading to both internal and external wars—and all this in the name of the People.

In the first place the Soviet is a local body, of the people and with the people. A member of the Soviet represents no more than about five hundred votes. He can be at any time replaced, he is always in sight—no invisibles allowed. Furthermore, the Soviet works "centripetally"—the central body is controlled by the periphery. In this respect the Soviet government may be compared to a central meteorological bureau, whose usefulness and efficacy, whose very *raison d'être*—is determined by the workings of the local weather bureaus.

Indeed, history seems to show mankind a new form of State organization which closely approaches the demands of the people, and corresponds with the new order of things ushered in by the Russian Revolution.

These last few days have brought here (in Petrograd) face to face these two types of representation—on one hand the Constituent Assembly, in which one man represents 200,000 wills, and on the other, the All-Russian Soviets,

those direct guards, interpreters and promoters of the social revolution, whose each member is so closely connected with the very pulse of the people. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by the power of the Soviets stirred no ripple on the faces of the immense sea of the Russian masses; while the threatened curtailment of the powers of the Soviets, two months ago, destroyed the Provisional Government.

Who does not realize how evasive language is? Present day representative government—the parliament—is so skilled in the handling of language that when the people clamor everywhere for peace, they are “persuaded” that peace can only be achieved by war; when they want a living they are given it at a prohibitive cost, etc., etc. The Soviet, being close to the people, must express realities literally, as the people itself expresses them.

The Soviet is probably the most important contribution of the Russian Revolution.

THE LESSONS OF THE REVOLUTION

A revolution marks a critical transition in the life of great popular masses. Of course, only a fully matured crisis renders a real revolution possible and necessary. Moreover, even as a transition period in the life of a single individual teaches him much, leads him through an emotional stage suffused with new rich content, so also does a revolution teach a whole nation in a relatively short time highly instructive and valuable lessons.

During a revolution millions and tens of millions of people learn in a single week incomparably more than in a whole year of every-day sluggish life. For at such critical moments in the life of a nation it becomes markedly evident which classes pursue certain aims, what are their relative forces, and the means at their command.

Every conscious workman, soldier and peasant should attentively ponder the lessons taught by the Russian Revolution; the more so now, at the end of July, when it is manifest that the first phase of our revolution has ended in failure.

I.

Indeed, let us see what the masses of workmen and peasants have been fighting for in carrying the revolution into life. What have they been expecting from the revolution? We all know that all along they hoped for freedom, peace, bread, land.

Now what are the actual facts?

Instead of freedom the arbitrary rule of the past is being restored. Capital punishment is being introduced at the front, peasants are brought to trial for “wilfully” seizing the landlord’s lands. The printing establishments of the Labor press are raided. The Bolsheviks are arrested, not

infrequently without accusation, or on the pretext of charges which are simply calumnious.

It may be argued that the persecution of the Bolsheviks is by no means a violation of freedom, since only certain persons on specific charges are thus persecuted. But such arguments bear the earmarks of premeditated untruth. For why should printing offices be raided, newspapers suppressed for the crimes of individuals, even if these crimes are proven and sustained by law? It would be altogether different if the government declared criminal the entire Bolshevik party, its ideas and views. But every one knows that the government of free Russia never could, and indeed never attempted to do anything of the kind.

And look at the venomous slanders launched against the Bolsheviks! The newspapers of both landlords and capitalists have been furiously attacking the Bolsheviks for their campaign against the war, against the landlords and against the capitalists. These newspapers openly demanded the arrest and prosecution of the Bolsheviks even before there was a single charge against a single Bolshevik.

The people desire peace. But the revolutionary government of free Russia has resumed the war of annexations, on the basis of those very secret treaties which the former Tsar Nicholas II concluded with the English and French capitalists, aimed at the spoliation of foreign nations by the Russian financial magnates. These secret treaties have never yet been made public. The government of free Russia has entrenched itself behind wiles and tricks, but it has not yet proposed a just peace to all nations.

Bread there is none. The menace of famine is imminent. It is an open secret how the capitalists and the rich loot the treasury on war orders (the war costs the people 50,000,000 roubles a day!) They reap enormous profits from the high cost of living, and absolutely nothing is being done toward improving the production and distribution of goods by and for the working class. The capitalists are more and more daring in locking out the workmen, throwing them on the street at a time when the people suffer from underproduction.

The overwhelming majority of the peasants throughout a long series of conferences have loudly and unequivocally announced their decision to proclaim as a crying injustice—nay more, as direct plunder—the ownership of the soil by the powerful landlords. And the government which calls itself revolutionary and democratic persists in foiling the peasants' desires, in deceiving them with promises and delays. The capitalists for months harassed Minister of Agriculture Tchernov's measures for enacting laws prohibiting the sale and purchase of land; and when a law of this type was finally promulgated, the capitalists began a despicable campaign of calumny against Tchernov, which continues unabated. In its defense of the landlords the government has not recoiled from knavery; it has determined to proceed by law against the peasants for the "wilful" seizure of land!

Yes, the peasants are deceived, they are persuaded to await the convocation of the Constituent Assembly; but the capitalists keep on postponing it. Now that the date for convocation has been, under pressure by the Bolsheviks, set for the 30th of September, the capitalists openly resent such an "impossibly" short interval, and again insist upon postponing the Constituent Assembly. The most influential members of the party of capitalists and landlords—the "Cadet" party, or the "Party of People's"—such as (Countess) Panina, openly preach the postponement of the Constituent Assembly until the end of the war.

Have patience with the land question until the Constituent Assembly! With the Constituent Assembly wait until the end of the war! With the end of the war wait until complete victory is won! This is the program. So do the capitalists and landlords, holding as they do the majority in the government, laugh and scoff at the poor peasants.

II.

But how did all this come to pass in a land where the rule of Tsardom has been overthrown? In a country that is not free the people are governed by a Tsar and a hand-

ful of capitalists, landlords, and bureaucrats elected by no one.

In a free country the people are governed by those whom they themselves have chosen for this very purpose. At the elections the people divide themselves into parties, and as a rule every class of the population forms its own party; thus the landlords, the capitalists, the peasants, the workmen have each their own parties. So, in free countries the government of a nation is shaped and influenced by the open struggle between parties and by their final agreements among themselves.

After the overthrow of the Tsar's regime, February 27, 1917, Russia for about four months was governed like a free country, namely by means of an open struggle between freely organized parties and of free agreements among themselves. In order therefore to understand the development of the Russian revolution, it is most important to scrutinize the nature of the various parties, the interests they have been defending, and finally, the relations of these parties to one another.

III.

After the overthrow of the Tsar's rule the power passed into the hands of the Provisional Government. The Provisional Government consisted of representatives of the bourgeoisie—that is to say the capitalists, with whom the landlords too joined hands. The party of the Cadets, the leading capitalist party, occupied first place as the ruling and state party of the bourgeoisie.

It was not by sheer accident that the power came into the hands of this party, though of course it was not the capitalists who fought the Tsar's troops, who shed blood for freedom's sake, but the workmen, peasants, sailors and soldiers. The ruling power nevertheless fell into the hands of the capitalistic party, because the capitalist class had at its command the power of wealth, of organization, and of education. Since 1905, and particularly during the war, the capitalist class, together with its joint partner, the

landlord class, won great success in its work of organization.

The Cadet party has always been monarchistic, in 1905 as well as all the years until 1917. After the people's victory over the tyranny of Tsardom, this party proclaimed itself republican. Historic experience teaches that whenever the people vanquishes its ruling dynasty, the capitalist class is ready to be converted to republicanism, in order to preserve the privileges of capitalism and to assert its hegemony over the people.

The Cadet party in words stands for the "People's Freedom." In deeds this party stands for all that is capitalistic. No wonder all the landlords, the monarchists, the Black Hundreds were quick to join it. Proof? The press and the elections. Immediately after the revolution all the bourgeois press and all the Black Hundred press sang in complete unison with the Cadets. All the monarchist parties, fearful of overt acts, supported the Cadets in the elections—at least in Petrograd.

Having thus seized the power, the Cadets spared no effort to continue the war of annexation and spoliation begun by Nicholas II, who had concluded secret treaties of alliance with the English and French capitalists. According to these agreements the Russian capitalists are promised, in case of victory, the occupation of Constantinople, Galicia, Armenia, etc. As to the people, the Cadet government fed it profusely on promises, postponing the solution of questions most important to the workmen and peasants until the Constituent Assembly, without however setting a date for its convocation.

Making use of their liberty the people began to organize. The chief organizations of the workmen and peasants, representing the overwhelming majority of Russia's population, were the Soviets of Workmen's, Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates. These Soviets sprang into existence during the days of the February revolution, and after a few weeks, in most of the large cities of Russia, as well as in many of the townships, all the conscious leading elements

of the working class and the peasantry were united in the Soviets.

The Soviets were elected without any restrictions whatever. The Soviets were the real organization of the masses of the nation, of the workers and of the peasants. The Soviets were the real organizations of the enormous majority of the people. The workmen and peasants, in military uniform, were under arms.

It is manifest that the Soviets both could and must take over the entire governing power. Indeed there could and should have been no other government but that of the Soviets until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. Only then would our revolution securely occupy the position of a really popular, really democratic revolution. Only then would the toiling masses, who really crave peace, who really are not interested in wars of annexation, be able resolutely and unflinchingly to enter upon a course of action which would immediately put an end to the war of annexations and bring about peace. Only then could the workers and peasants check and bridle the capitalists who pile up colossal war profits, having brought the country to the verge of collapse and famine. But within the Soviets only the minority of the delegates were on the side of the revolutionary party of the workers—the Bolsheviks, who demanded the transfer of all the ruling power to the Soviets. [The majority of the delegates sided with the Mensheviks and "Essers," who opposed such a transfer of power. Instead of superseding the government of the bourgeoisie by that of the Soviets, these parties advocated the support of the bourgeoisie by means of a coalition government. This policy of alliance with the bourgeoisie, pursued by the very parties which the nation blindly trusted and followed, the Essers and Mensheviks, reflects the whole revolutionary process undergone by the Revolution since its inception five months ago.]

IV.

Let us first examine the history of this Esser and Menshevik policy of alliance with the bourgeoisie; then we shall consider the circumstances which led the people to repose confidence in these parties.

V.

The mutual understanding between the capitalists and the Essers and Mensheviks has become manifest, now in one form, now in another, all through the course of the Russian revolution.

In the latter part of February, 1917, soon after the nation had conquered and the rule of the Tsar had been overthrown, the capitalist Provisional Government included Kerensky as the "Socialist" member. Now, Kerensky in point of fact has never been a Socialist; he was only a "Troudovik." Only in March, 1917, did he begin to figure among the Social Revolutionists, when such a position was no longer dangerous nor unprofitable. It was, of course, the aim of the capitalist Provisional Government to use Kerensky, then Vice-President of the Petrograd Soviet, as a link by which it could chain to itself the whole Soviet. The Soviet—that is to say, its majority—consisting of Essers and Mensheviks, took the bait, and soon after the formation of the Provisional Government consented to support it "inasmuch as it fulfills its promises."

The Soviet regarded itself as the accountant, the comptroller of the deeds of the Provisional Government. But during all this time the Provisional Government did not make a single serious effort to foster the development of the revolution. It did absolutely nothing with regard to its own immediate task of convoking the Constituent Assembly; it has not yet presented the question to the locals, nor has it even established a central commission to elaborate this question. The Government's only care was: clandestinely to renew the predatory international treaties which the Tsar had concluded with the capitalists

of England and France, cautiously and insensibly to thwart the course of the revolution, to promise everything and to accomplish nothing. The Essers and Mensheviks of the "contact committee" played the role of fools lavishly fed on grand phrases, promises, "tomorrows." Like the crow in the fable, the Essers and Mensheviks succumbed to flattery, listened complacently to the capitalists' assurances that they highly esteemed the Soviets, and that they would not move a step without them.

In reality, however, time passed and still the capitalist government did nothing to further the revolution. On the contrary, it succeeded, against the revolution, in renewing or rather confirming the secret predatory treaties, and in "reviving" them by additional no less secret negotiations with the diplomats of Anglo-French imperialism. It succeeded, against the revolution, in laying the foundation for a counter-revolutionary organization of the generals and officers of the active army—or at all events in bringing them closer together. It succeeded, against the revolution, in calling into existence an organization of merchants and manufacturers who, gradually yielding under the pressure of the workmen, began at the same time to harass production, and to prepare its complete cessation at the propitious moment.

But the organization of the more advanced workmen and peasants within the Soviets unswervingly went forward. The best men of the oppressed classes felt that the Government, in spite of its understanding with the Petrograd Soviet, in spite of Kerensky's grandiloquence, in spite of the "contact committee," remained as ever the enemy of the people, the enemy of the revolution. The masses, too, felt that if the resistance of the capitalists remained unbroken, the cause of peace, the cause of freedom, the very cause of the revolution would be irreparably lost. Impatience and vindictive passions rose high in the masses.

VI.

On April 20-21 it burst. The movement broke forth elementally, spontaneously. It was so rigorously directed against the Government that one regiment fully armed went straight to the Marinsky Palace to arrest the ministers. It was universally apparent that the Government could no longer hold out. The Soviets at that time could (and ought to) have taken the power into their hands without the least resistance from any quarter. Instead, the Essers and Mensheviks have supported the toppling capitalist Government, have ever more entangled themselves in their "alliance policy," have taken ever more fatal steps leading to the ruin of the revolution.

The revolution teaches all classes with a rapidity and thoroughness unknown in times of peace and everyday life. The capitalists, who are better organized, more expert in the business of class struggle and class politics, learned the lesson more readily than the other classes. Seeing that the position of the Government was untenable, they resorted to a method which since 1848 has been for decades practiced by the capitalists in order to befog, divide and finally to overpower the working class. This method is the so-called "coalition ministry," composed of bourgeois and of renegades from the Socialist camp.

In those countries where freedom and democracy have existed side by side with the revolutionary movement of the workers—for example in England and France—the capitalists make use of this subterfuge, and very successfully, too. The "Socialist" leaders upon entering the bourgeois ministries, invariably prove mere figure-heads, puppets, simply a shield for the capitalists, a tool with which to defraud the workers. The "democratic and republican" Russian capitalists set in motion the very same scheme. The Essers and Mensheviks fell a victim to it, and on May 6 a "coalition" ministry, with the participation of Tchernov, Tseretelli & Co. became an accomplished fact.

The fools of the Esser and Menshevik parties were jubilant, complacently basking as they did in the radi-

ance emanating from the Ministerial glory of their leaders. The capitalists congratulated themselves on having obtained such formidable allies against the people as the "leaders of the Soviets"—on having received from them the promise to support "aggressive action on the front;" in other words, the renewal of imperialistic predatory war, which had been interrupted for a while. Well did the capitalists know the impotence of these leaders; well did they know that the promises of the bourgeoisie—regarding control and organization of production, peace policy, etc.—would never be kept.

And so it happened. The second phase of the development of the revolution, extending over the period between May 6 and June 18, fully satisfied the expectations of the capitalists as to their success in deceiving the Essers and Mensheviks.

While Pechekhonov and Skobelev (of the duped parties) were fooling both themselves and the people into believing highflown phrases that they would take away the capitalists' 100 per cent profit, that "their resistance is broken," etc.—the capitalists went on fortifying themselves. Nothing, absolutely nothing was done to check them, all during that time. The renegade ministers proved to be mere talking machines to blind the oppressed classes, and the entire governmental apparatus remained in the hands of the bureaucrats and the bourgeoisie. The notorious Palchinsky, assistant Minister of Commerce, was a typical representative of this machine, blocking as he did any and every measure directed against the capitalists. The ministers kept on chatting—and all remained as before.

Minister Tseretelli was especially utilized by the bourgeoisie in its fight against the revolution. He was dispatched to "pacify" Cronstadt, where the revolutionists had dared to remove the commissar appointed by the Government. At that time the bourgeois press launched an incredibly clamorous, malicious, furious campaign of falsehood and invective against Cronstadt, accusing it of intending to "split off from Russia"; repeating

this and similar absurdities in a thousand variations, to frighten the petty bourgeoisie and the unsophisticated philistines. The most typical representative of this dull, panic-stricken class, Tseretelli, innocently took the bait and energetically went to work to "subdue and pacify" Cronstadt, without realizing his own position as a minion of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. In fact this man was a tool in bringing about an "understanding" with revolutionary Cronstadt, according to which the commissar of the place was not to be appointed by the Government, but elected by the local citizens and only confirmed by the Government. With such miserable compromises, the ministers who had deserted Socialism to please the bourgeoisie, spent all their time.

Thus, whenever a bourgeois minister could not possibly appear in defense of the Government, as for example, before revolutionary workers, or the Soviets, a "Socialist" minister appeared (or rather, was sent) by the bourgeoisie—such as Skobelev, Tseretelli, Tchernov, etc. He conscientiously accomplished the bourgeoisie's job, defended the ministry, white-washed the capitalists, befogged the minds of the people by repeating promises, promises, only promises—and ended by advising them to wait, wait, wait.

Minister Tchernov was kept particularly busy bargaining with his bourgeois colleagues. Down to this very month of July, when after the shake-up of July 3-4 the new "crisis of power" took place, and the Cadets left the cabinet, Minister Tchernov was always occupied with the useful, interesting, profoundly national work of "persuading" his bourgeois colleagues, of exhorting them to consent at least to a law prohibiting the purchase of land. Such a law had been solemnly promised to the peasantry at the All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Soviets in Petrograd, but it remained only a promise. Tchernov was unable to fulfill it either in May or in June. Only at the moment of the elemental wave of revolutionary explosion on July 3-4, when the Cadets left the ministry—only then was the law put in force. But it proved to be a solitary measure,

incapable of seriously aiding the peasants in their struggle with the landlords for possession of the soil.

Meanwhile the "revolutionary democrat" Kerensky, this newly-fledged member of the Social-Revolutionist party, was brilliantly accomplishing at the front the counter-revolutionary task of resuming the imperialistic, predatory war; the task in which Gutchkov, the despised of the people, had utterly failed. Kerensky was intoxicated with his own eloquence; the imperialists who used him burned incense to him—he was flattered, worshipped. And all this for his loyal, devoted service to the capitalists—exhorting the "revolutionary armies" to consent to a renewal of a war avowedly waged in fulfillment of Tsar Nicholas' treaties with the capitalists of England and France—a war to conquer for the Russian capitalists Constantinople and Lemberg, Erzerum and Trebizond.

Thus passed the second phase of the Russian revolution, from May 6 to June 9. The counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, having strengthened its position and fortified itself under cover and protection of the "Socialist" ministers, was preparing an onslaught upon both the external and the internal enemy—the revolutionary workmen.

VII.

On June 9 the party of the revolutionary workers, the Bolsheviks, arranged for a demonstration in Petrograd to give articulate expression to the ever-growing dissatisfaction and indignation of the masses. The leaders of the Essers and Mensheviks, entangled in their alliances with the bourgeoisie, bound hand and foot by their imperialistic war policy, became alarmed, feeling that they were losing their hold upon the masses. A general outcry was raised against this demonstration—an outcry in which the Essers and Mensheviks joined the counter-revolutionary Cadets. Under the guidance of the Essers and Mensheviks, as a result of their policy of alliance with the capitalists, the tendency of the petty bourgeoisie to unite with the grand counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie defined itself with amazing clearness. In this very fact is contained the his-

toric significance, the profound class-meaning of the crisis of July 9.

The Bolsheviks, unwilling to lead the workmen into a desperate battle against the united Cadets, Essers and Mensheviks, decided to give up the demonstration. But the Essers and Mensheviks, hoping to retain at least a little of their waning influence among the masses, felt impelled to order a general demonstration for June 18. As for the bourgeoisie, it lost its wits out of sheer rage—recognizing in this move the leaning of the petty bourgeoisie toward the side of the proletariat—and determined to paralyze the action of the democracy by a military movement on the front.

Indeed, the 18th of June gave an awe-inspiring victory to the slogans of the revolutionary proletariat, the rallying cries of the Bolsheviks among the Petrograd masses; so on June 19th the bourgeoisie and the Bonapartist Kerensky announced that the military offensive at the front had begun on that very 18th of June!

This meant practically the resumption of a war of spoliation, in the interests of the capitalists, against the will of the great majority of the toiling masses. With this renewed belligerency there was connected, on the one hand, the tremendous growth of chauvinism and the passage of military—and consequently of political power into the hands of a gang of Bonapartists. On the other hand, the recourse to violent repression of the masses, persecution of the internationalists, abolition of the freedom of propaganda, arrests and wholesale shooting of those who opposed the war.

If the 6th of May tied the Essers and Mensheviks to the triumphal chariot of the bourgeoisie by a rope, the 19th of June shackled them with chains.

VIII.

The resentment of the masses upon the renewal of the war of spoliation naturally grew and grew. On July 3-4 their indignation burst forth in an explosion which the

Bolsheviks tried to mitigate, of course attempting to direct it into organized channels.

The Essers and Mensheviks, as the slaves of the bourgeoisie fettered to their masters, consented to everything; to the bringing of reactionary troops to Petrograd, the restoration of capital punishment, the disarming of the workmen and of the revolutionary soldiers—to arrests, persecutions, the suppression of newspapers. The power which the bourgeoisie, inside the Government, could not entirely usurp, which the Soviets refused to take, fell into the hands of a military clique of Bonapartists who were, of course, supported by the Cadets and the landlords, by the Black Hundreds and the Capitalists.

Step by step downward. Once on the inclined plane of alliances with the bourgeoisie, the Essers and Mensheviks irretrievably went onward and down to the very bottom. On February 28th, in the Petrograd Soviet, they had promised the Provisional Government only conditional support. On May 6 they saved it from collapse, and allowed themselves to become its hirelings and defenders, unreservedly countenancing an aggressive campaign on the front. On June 9th they united with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in a campaign of falsehood and calumny against the revolutionary proletariat. On June 19 they approved the renewal of the predatory war. July 3 they assented to the calling in of the reactionary regiments—the beginning of the final and complete surrender of the power to the Bonapartists. Step by step downward.

The disgusting fate of these parties, the Essers and Mensheviks, is by no means an accident; European experience has many times proven it to be the outcome of the economic situation of the small property holders—the petty bourgeoisie.

IX.

It is a matter of common observation how the small proprietor uses all his energies to get into the society of the wealthy, to reach the rank of "captain of industry," to become one of the "400," to enter the plane of the

bourgeoisie. So long as capitalism reigns supreme, the petty property holder will be confronted with two alternatives: either to succeed in climbing to the heights of the capitalist class (at best possible for one per cent) or to remain for a while struggling in the position of a ruined little "boss," a semi-proletarian, and to land at last with a crash in the ranks of the proletariat. It is likewise in politics. The petty bourgeois democracy, especially in the persons of its leaders, clings to the skirts of the bourgeoisie. These leaders console their followers with promises and assurances of the plausibility of alliance with the grand bourgeoisie. For a short time at best they are favored by the capitalists with some tid-bits of concession to the few top layers of the toiling masses; but in everything decisive, in every matter of importance, the petty—bourgeoisie—democracy remains floating in the penumbra of the bourgeoisie, an impotent appendage, an obedient tool in the hands of the financial magnates. The experience of England and France has often proven this.

During the Russian revolution, when under the pressure of the imperialistic war and the momentous crisis created by it, events unfolded with extraordinary swiftness, the period of February-July, 1917, has fully corroborated the old Marxist theory regarding the instability of the position occupied by the petty bourgeoisie.

The ultimate lesson of the Russian revolution: There is no salvation for the toiling masses in the iron jaws of war, of famine, of enslavement by landlords and capitalists except in complete rupture with the parties of the Essers and Mensheviks, in the clear realization of their treacherous role, in the renunciation of any and all alliances with the bourgeoisie, in decisive union with the revolutionary workers. Supported by the poorest peasants, only the revolutionary workers can overcome the resistance of the capitalists, lead the nation to the winning of the soil without compensation, to complete liberty, victory over starvation, victory over the war, a just and secure peace.

N. Lenin.

AFTERWARD

This article, as can be seen from the text, was written in July. The history of the August revolution has fully borne out the contentions stated above. Moreover, the Kornilov uprising, toward the end of August, has created a new turning point in the revolution, unmistakably proving to the people that the Cadets, in union with the counter-revolutionary generals, seek to rout the Soviets and restore the monarchy. How strong this new turn of the revolution is, and how successful it will be in putting an end to alliances with the bourgeoisie, are questions for the near future to decide.

N. Lenin.

Sept. 6, 1917.

ONE OF THE RADICAL QUESTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION

The most serious question of every revolution is plainly that of the governing power. Everything depends upon the question of what class holds that power. Now if the organ of the leading government party in Russia (Essers), the Dielo Naroda ("Cause of the People"), recently complained (No. 147) that in the struggle for power the questions of bread and the Constituent Assembly are forgotten, the Essers may be answered: "Blame yourselves. It is the hesitancy, the irresolution of your party which is to blame for the continuous performance of ministerial leap-frog—for the repeated postponement of the Constituent Assembly, for the undermining by the capitalists of the measures undertaken to monopolize bread, and thus supply the country with it."

The question of the governing power can be neither obviated nor dismissed, for it is just this fundamental question which determines the development of the revolution, both in its external and internal policy. It certainly cannot be disputed that our revolution has lost in vain half a year squabbling over the establishment of power, but this is due to the vacillating policy of the Essers and Mensheviks. And this policy was in the last instance determined by the class standard of the petty bourgeoisie, by its economic instability in the struggle between labor and capital.

The question now is, whether or not the petty bourgeois democracy has learned a lesson during this great half-year, so unusually rich in historical content. If not, then the revolution is lost, and only the victorious uprising of the proletariat can save it. If so, then it is imperative to

begin at once the construction of a stable, unfaltering power. Now, during a popular revolution—a revolution that has aroused the masses, the majority of the workmen and peasants—only that power can be stable which avowedly and unconditionally rests upon the majority of the population. Hitherto the governing power in Russia has been de facto in the hands of the bourgeoisie, which is forced now and then to make partial concessions (only to withdraw them at the first opportunity), to dish out promises (only to cheat the people with the complexion of an “honest” coalition), etc. In word—a popular, democratic, revolutionary government; in deed—an antipopular, anti-democratic, counter-revolutionary, bourgeois government. This is the fatal contradiction that has heretofore been the source of the instability and fluctuation of power, of the “ministerial leap-frog” so sedulously played by the Essers and Mensheviks to the detriment of the people.

Either rout the Soviets, let them die an ignominious death, or give all power to the Soviets—this I proclaimed before the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in June, 1917; and the history of July and August has incontrovertibly borne out the correctness of that utterance. The power to the Soviets—this power alone can claim stability, inasmuch as it truly rests upon the majority of the population, in spite of all the lies spread broadcast by the lackeys of the bourgeoisie, such as Potressov, Plekhanov, etc., who call it “widening the base” of the government when the power is actually surrendered to an insignificant minority of the people—the bourgeoisie and the exploiters.

Only the Soviet power could be firm, the only power which it would be impossible to overthrow, even in stormiest moments of the most tempestuous revolution; only such power could ensure the steady, ever-spreading development of the revolution, the peaceable struggle of the parties within the Soviets. So long as such a power is lacking, the inevitable consequences will be irresolution, instability, vacillation, endless “crises of power,” the futile comedy of “ministerial leap-frog,” and outbursts from both left and right.

But the slogan, “All Power to the Soviets,” is frequently, if not almost always, interpreted very incorrectly to mean: a ministry recruited from the parties of the Soviet majority. We shall consider at length this highly-mistaken notion.

A ministry of the Soviet majority would mean only a personal change in the composition of the ministry, leaving intact the entire old apparatus of the governing power, an apparatus thoroughly bureaucratic, incapable of carrying out any serious reforms, not even those found in the platforms of the Essers and the Mensheviks.

“All Power to the Soviets” means the thorough reconstruction of the old State apparatus, the apparatus of antiquated officialdom which thwarts everything democratic; it means the removal of this apparatus and the substitution of a new, popular, really democratic apparatus of the Soviets; that is today, the organized and fully armed majority of the people—workers, soldiers and peasants. And finally, it means full independence for the majority of the nation, not only in choosing delegates, but also in administering the State, and carrying out all necessary reforms.

In order to make the contrast more clear-cut and definite, we shall recall a very important confession made some time ago by the organ of the Government party, the Essers, *Dielo Naroda* (“Cause of the People”). “Even in the departments which are in the hands of the Socialist ministers,” writes this paper at the time of the notorious “Coalition Ministry”—“even in these departments the whole administrative apparatus is antiquated, and obstructs work.”

That goes without saying. The history of the bourgeois-parliamentary and the bourgeois-constitutional countries shows that a change of ministers means very little, for the real work of administration is lodged in the hands of a colossal army of officials, and this army is permeated with the anti-democratic spirit. By thousands and millions of threads it is connected with the landlords and the bourgeoisie, and dependent upon them in every way. This army breathes only the atmosphere of bourgeois relations

with which it is surrounded; it is congealed, shrivelled with age, stiff and inert; it is powerless to escape from this atmosphere, unable to think, feel or act otherwise than it has always acted. This army is imbued with admiration for rank, for certain privileges of "State" service, and its upper strata are enslaved by stocks and bonds to Financial Capital, in a measure acting as its direct agents, the executors of its interests and influence.

To attempt by means of this administrative apparatus the carrying out of such reforms as the redeemed confiscation of landed estates, the monopolizing of bread, etc., is a huge illusion, a deception of the people.

This apparatus can well serve a republican bourgeoisie, creating a republic in the form of a "monarchy without a monarch," after the fashion of the Third French Republic; but it is absolutely powerless to carry out reforms, not only ultra radical but even such as would limit the rights of capital, the rights of "sacred private property." Thus in all "coalition" ministries which include Socialists, the inevitable consequence is that the Socialists, however conscientious and personally irreproachable, remain in reality a mere screen for the bourgeois government, a lightning rod to divert the popular indignation from the government, a tool by which to foil the masses. It was so with Louis Blanc in 1848, it has been so since then time and time again in England and France when Socialists participated in the government; it was so too with Tchernov and Tsere-telli in 1917—and so it will be as long as the capitalist order exists and is supported by an outworn, bourgeois, bureaucratic administrative apparatus.

The Soviets of Workmen's, Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates are invaluable for the very reason that they represent a new, incomparably higher, incomparably more democratic type of administrative apparatus. The Essers and Mensheviks did everything possible and impossible to convert the Soviets (particularly the Petrograd Soviet, and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee) into mere talking machines busy, under the pretext of "control," with formulating futile resolutions and humble petitions

which the Government disregarded in the most polite and affable manner. But the fresh breeze of the Kornilov adventure, pregnant with threatening tempest, forced the Soviet to cast off, for a time, all that was obnoxious, and the initiative of the revolutionary masses loomed up as something majestic, powerful, invincible.

Let those who are weak of faith learn by this historic example. Shame upon those who say, "We have no apparatus with which to replace the old one, which invariably supports the bourgeoisie;" for we have such an apparatus—the Soviets. Fear not the initiative and independent action of the masses, have confidence in the revolutionary organization of the masses, and in all departments of the State you will behold the force, the magnificence, the invincibility of the workmen and peasants, which they showed in their enthusiastic solidarity against the Kornilov attempt.

Distrust of the masses, fear of their initiative, fear of their independence, trembling at their revolutionary energy instead of enthusiastically and unreservedly supporting it—this was the greatest sin of the Essers and Mensheviks. Here can be found the very root of their irresolution, their vacillation, their endless and endlessly fruitless attempts to pour new wine into the bottles of the old bureaucratic apparatus.

Read the history of the democratization of the Russian army in the Russian revolution of 1917, the history of Tchernov's ministry, the history of the "ruling" Palchinsky, the history of Pechekhonov's resignation—you will find at every step the most instructive substantiation of this fact. The fact that there was no complete confidence in the elected soldiers' organizations, no full realization of the principle of election of officers by the soldiers themselves, enabled the Kornilovs, Kaledins and counter-revolutionary officers to be at the head of the army. This is a fact. And whoever does not wantonly shut his eyes cannot help seeing that after the Kornilov affair the Kerensky Government left everything as it was—that in reality it restored Kornilov rule. The appointment of Alexeiev, the "pact" with the Klembovskis, Gagarins,

Bagrattions and other Kornilov followers, the kindly treatment accorded to the Kornilovs and Kaledins—all this shows how Kerensky was restoring the Kornilov rule.

Experience teaches that there is no middle course possible. Either all the power to the Soviets and complete democratization of the army, or Kornilov.

And the history of Tehernov? Wasn't the greatest enthusiasm aroused among the peasants by any step, however small, toward the real satisfaction of their needs—every step which attested confidence in them, and in their mass organizations and mass actions? But for four months Tehernov was compelled again and again to “bargain” with the Cadets and the bureaucrats, who with their everlasting protractions and underhanded tactics finally forced him to leave without having accomplished anything. The landlords and capitalists “having won the game” held back the Constituent Assembly and even started a series of repressive measures against the Land Committees.

Experience teaches that there is no middle course possible. Either all power to the Soviets, centrally and locally, all the land to the peasants at once, before the decision of the Constituent Assembly, or the landlords and capitalists will thwart everything, restore the rule of the landlords, arouse the resentment of the peasants, and so aggravate the situation as to cause a regrettably violent agrarian revolt.

It is the same story with the capitalists who, with the aid of Palchinsky prevent any serious control over production, the merchants preventing monopolization of bread, and even Pechekhonov's attempt to establish the principle of a regulated democratic bread distribution.

In Russia now the question is not to invent new reforms, to undertake cherished transformations. Nothing of the kind. Yet that is how the question is put—and put knowingly, falsely by the capitalists, the Petrossovs, the Plekhanovs who clamor against the “introduction of Socialism” and the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” In reality the situation in Russia is such that the unequalled sufferings of

the war, the unparalleled danger of imminent ruin and famine, have themselves dictated the way out, have themselves pointed out the imperative necessity of these reforms: bread monopoly, control of production and distribution, the limitation of the issue of paper money, regular exchange of bread for commodities, etc.

Measures of this kind, in this direction, are universally acknowledged to be inevitable. They have been begun in many places and in widely different ways, and everywhere their realization is obstinately resisted by the landlords and capitalists, aided by the Kerensky Government—a thoroughly bourgeois and Bonapartist Government—as well as the direct and indirect pressure of Russian and “Allied” finance.

I. Prilajaiev recently wrote in the *Dielo Naroda* (“Cause of the People”—No. 147), lamenting the resignation of Pechekhonov, the failure of price-fixing, the collapse of the bread monopoly:

“Courage and resolution—that is what all our governments, of whatever complexion, have lacked. * * * The revolutionary democracy need not hesitate; it should take the initiative itself, and intervene in the economic chaos. * * * Here if anywhere at all a firm policy and a resolute power are indispensable.”

Yes, what is true is certainly true! Golden words. It has not, however, occurred to the author that the question of a firm policy, of a daring spirit, of determination, is not a question of personalities, but a question of the class that is capable of daring and decisive action. The only such class is the proletariat. With the daring and resoluteness of power, its unflinching policy is nothing less than the dictatorship of the proletariat, including the poorest peasants. I. Prilajaiev, without being conscious of it, craves that very dictatorship.

What would such dictatorship mean? Nothing less than that the resistance of the Kornilov followers would be overcome, and the complete democratization of the army accomplished. Ninety-nine per cent of the army would declare

themselves ardent adherents of this dictatorship two days after its realization. This dictatorship would give the land to the peasants and full power to the peasants' local committees; how can any sane man doubt that the peasants would support such a dictatorship? What Pechekhonov only imagined ("the resistance of the capitalists is broken," he said before the Soviets), this dictatorship would convert into reality without the least harm to the inchoate democratic organizations for food supply, industrial control, etc.; on the contrary, it would support and develop them, while removing all obstacles in their way.

Only the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants is capable of breaking the resistance of the capitalists, of manifesting a truly majestic courage and resoluteness of power, of securing to itself the enthusiastic, loyal and heroic support of the army masses and the peasant masses.

All power to the Soviets—the sole power which can render further evolution gradual, peaceful and tranquil, proceeding in perfect accord with the level of consciousness and decision exhibited by the majority of the popular masses—in perfect accord with the level of their own experience. All power to the Soviets—this means a complete surrender of the administration of the country and of control over its economic resources to the workmen, and peasants, whom no one would dare to resist, and who would soon learn by experience, from their own practice, justly to distribute the bread, the land, and the necessities.

N. Lenin.

APPENDIX

I.

A country may be spoken of in terms of either its political or economic-industrial form. In the political sense countries are: Autocracies (where politically privileged classes still exist; though now there are no more absolute monarchies, and the autocracies still extant may be called semi-democracies); and Democracies (where no personal or class privileges exist, and the individual enjoys perfect freedom of movement). In the economic sense all nations are capitalistic; that is, all necessities of life are produced and distributed on the basis of a politically legalized principle of private ownership in land, national resources, and factories. This system of national economies is such that the great accumulation of wealth produced by nothing but labor remains as if by magic in the hands of a Few.

II.

All revolutions known until now, though always started by, and in the interest of, hungry stomachs, have always remained in the end merely political. Autocracies were reduced to semi-autocracies (as in Germany, Italy, Austria), or to democracies (France, America). Now there seems to have set in an era of a new sort of revolution—the economico-social—and Russia seems to be leading the way. Study the parties and know!

"*Cadets*"—Constitutional Democrats (so-called because of the first initials of their name). Its official title is "Party of People's Freedom." This party is only political. In order to preserve economically the capitalist order, it is ready to make concessions right and left—to Kornilovs

and Tchernovs. Its representatives are: Miliukov, Rodzianko.

"Essers"—Socialists, Revolutionists (also called by their initials). A predominantly economic party, but originally one-sided, representing only the peasants. It stands for the abolition of private property in land only, and that by redemption. In its new program the redemption clause is abandoned in face of the rapidly-growing power of its left wing, the

"Left Essers"—Who share the present Soviet Government with the

"Bolsheviks"—The most powerful wing of the Social Democrats, and the revolutionary party which achieved the October revolution, now in control of the Government. This party expresses the desires of the whole toiling masses of the people, poor peasants as well as factory workers, to replace in the economico-industrial foundation the principle of private property and capitalism by that of national ownership and Socialism. The name "Bolshevik" does not mean "Maximalist," as commonly supposed, but "member of the majority;" and it is derived from the fact that at a former congress of the Social-Democratic party, the delegates split into two factions, the majority, or bolshinstvo, favoring immediate proletarian action to hasten the coming of Socialism. Since 1905 the Bolsheviks have really been in a minority, until September, 1917, while the dominating faction was the

"Mensheviks"—Or as it would be translated, "members of the minority;" now only too true. This party includes many shades: Internationalists, Social-Patriots, etc. It represents the Intellectuals, which means: inasmuch as the great achievements of knowledge and education are still in the hands of the old order, the Intellectuals as a class and as the incarnation of those achievements are nearer to the Cadets than to the Bolsheviks.

Assorted Social-Democrats—Certain "groups," with a small following, on the fringes of the Social-Democratic party, whose tactics differentiate them from the main

branches of the party. "Edinstvo" group, headed by Plekhanov; the "Unified Social-Democrats," headed by Maxim Gorki, etc. These groups range from almost perfect reactionaries to Intellectual internationalists, and have little influence at the present time.

Note—Just as every political party has its Right, Center and Left, so every faction, every group is so divided.

III.

Some Definitions

Landlord (Pomiestchik). A member of a class of the old nobility which owned most of the land, holding the poor peasants almost in slavery. In the last two decades of greater political liberty there have sprung up two new types of landlord:

"Fist" (Kulak). The name for a parvenu rich villager who buys up the land of the poor peasants, and keeps them in bondage by various financial schemes.

Capitalist Landlord. This is the rich city manufacturer investing his surplus capital in land, and becoming as ruthless a Fist as his prototype.

Of course these three sub-classes compose the Landlord Class, which in its policy goes hand in hand with the Cadets forming the

(Grand) Bourgeoisie. All the classes opposed to an economic revolution.

Petty Bourgeoisie. The small property-holders, bosses, shop-keepers, etc. They occupy the middle class stage and their policy is divided; the poorer ones embracing Bolshevism, the richer remaining with the bourgeoisie.

Constituent Assembly (Uchreditelnoe Sobranie). A representative body elected on the basis of universal suffrage, both sexes, age 20, voting secret ballot. This body is supposed to assemble January 5th, 1918 (old style), to lay the foundation of a State constitution.

(See Introduction.)

Soviet (Council). The Soviets of Workmen's, Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates are bodies elected directly by small units of the population, so that from 200 to 500 votes have one representative.

(See Introduction.)

C. E. C. Central Executive Committee, representing the United Soviets of All Russia and electing the People's Commissars—now the Provisional Government of the Russian Republic. The C. E. C. is the parliament of the new Government.